

3/Mar/2004 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Moore is More...

Residents of Dunstable and Luton are in for a real treat this coming weekend when Irish singer / songwriter **Gavin Moore** visits the area. He'll actually be over staying with friends in Dunstable but has been persuaded to do some gigs while he's here. Gavin originally hails from County Kildare and after spending some three years in California as a child he moved to Cork where he stuck. The latest scion of the famous Moore musical family which encompasses his uncles the legendary Christy Moore and Luka Bloom (aka Kevin Barry Moore), Gavin has a lot to live up to, but early indications are that he will match the sensitivity and passion of his progenitors.

At 24 he is the at the start of his musical journey with - as yet - a single record to his name; a debut EP titled "Live at De Barra's" which was released last November. The record has received airplay at both local and national radio and has met widespread approval from listeners and critics alike. According to Siobhán Long - writing for Ireland's Hotpress - "Gavin's been known to bring the entire venue to complete silence with his self-penned songs and peerless guitar picking." If you want to see what the fuss is about, the you can see Gavin on Friday at The Sugar Loaf in Luton, the White Swan in Dunstable on Saturday or at Club Erin on Sunday. For more information contact Declan Duggan on 01582-661665/667833 or you can check out his website at www.gavinmoore.com.

Andy Gotch tells me that the first of his regular 'Fun in the Forest' gigs at the Markyate Broomhills Club was a great success with over 200 guests dancing to a live performance by his band - despite some having to a struggle to find it up and down its long winding country lane. Making their debut with the band were two singers - first **Peter Kerrigan** from Luton who has the ability to sing songs from Sinatra to Soul to the Beatles. Peter will be taking over the vocal reins from **Cliff Lath** who is moving on to other things. Also appearing for the first time with the band was Luton songstress **Stacey-Marie** who the band reckon is destined for great things. If you want to join in the fun then the next gig is on Friday with entry to the club being £5 which includes a hot snack. Be aware though that the Club's policy is strictly for the over 30's for entry. The Broomhills Club is based near Markyate just off the A5 - for more information you can e-mail AndrewGotch@aol.com or phone him on 07785-262942.

10/Mar/2004 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

If have a hankering to catch some top class blues rock then why not boogie over to Tring this weekend for the 'Rocking the Blues' festival. The festival kicks off on Friday night with a concert featuring Detroit's **Marcus Malone** and his band supported by **Hershey and the 12 Bar**, **Stir Crazy** and **Damien McCabe**, and if you want to chill out the **Ian Salisbury** will provide some blues piano in the bar. On Saturday lunch-time there will be a jam session hosted by Roadhouse who no doubt will be celebrating their recent signing of a three album deal with the Blues Matters label. Last year this was hugely popular so to reserve a place by calling 01296-631898 or emailing bluesjam@rockingtheblues.com. The sold-out Saturday night concerts features **Nine Below Zero**, **The Papa George Band** and the **Moon Dogs** but there may be returned tickets if you're lucky.

The festival wraps up with the "Rocking the Blues Fair" on Sunday (Mar 14) which is a must for blues lovers and for anyone in guitar, basses, amps, guitar based music. There will be guitar and equipment displays, new and used sales, demonstrations, workshop/clinics from top manufacturers and local music shops. There will also be sales of new, used and collectable Blues records and CDs. The highlight of the fair is the presence of local company Marshall Amplification with founder Jim Marshall signing posters and a performance at lunch-time from **Gary Fletcher of the Blues Band** on acoustic guitar playing some well crafted songs. Entry to the fair costs £4 for adults and only £2 for under 16's, doors open at 11am. All the festival events take place at The Court Theatre at Pendley, Station Road, Tring, Herts HP23 4QZ (box office 01442-824673) and you can browse the details at www.rockingtheblues.com.

If your urges are more terpsichorean - that is you want to dance - then Friday (Mar 12) sees the next Dunstable Tyre Kickers' Ceilidh (i.e. Barn Dance) taking place at St Mary's Catholic Church Social Club, West Street, Dunstable. This month's ceilidh local threesome **Nelsons Arm Band** with caller **Chris Jewell**. The band features the violin (and electric guitar) of **Kevin Adams** (Stocai) and the melodeon of **Elaine Smith** and the bass and keyboard skills of **Ned Clack**. Tickets are £6 or £3 for concessions and under 12s and there is a bar available. For more information details are on the web at www.roots66.net/tkc. The next dance in the series will be **MoonDance** with caller **Malcolm North** in May (May 14) as there is no ceilidh in April due to the Easter holiday.

17/Mar/2004 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

Bloc Party at The Well

Milton Keynes based 13 Promotions is launching into the Luton music on Saturday (Mar 20) with a gig at The Well in Hightown by bringing together acts from London, Luton and Milton Keynes. The main act on the night will be **Bloc Party** who are described as an exciting four piece and the gig is part of their nationwide tour. The band appear to have kicked off in 1998 when **Kele Okereke** (voice & guitar) met up with **Russell Lissac** (guitar) through the fine print of the music papers. Adding **Gordon Moakes** (bass & voice) and **Matt Tong** (drums) to the mix they have come up with a sound that has been described by the NME as 'The band to get London dancing again'. On playing the sample tracks on their website (www.blocparty.com), the band seem to produce an interesting mix of heavily dance orientated music combined with more 'arty' elements to give a slightly 'Brian Eno' ambient edge. Supporting on the night will be Milton Keynes based **21 dEAd** and Luton's **Bowfinger**. Admission price is £4 and the doors open at 7:30pm. This could be a very popular gig so get there early! This gig is the first of a series designed to bring the Luton and Milton Keynes music scenes closer together, so get down there and support it.

Danny Baylis from the local soul funk outfit **Common Ground** dropped me a line to say that they have been pretty busy recently doing a mini-tour. However they will be playing some local gigs in the near future starting on Friday (Mar 19) with a gig at Eddie's bar in Luton followed on April 3 with a return visit to The Well in Hightown, Luton. If you've not heard them yet, their sound is a funky, rhythmic, melodic mix which has influences from Brand New Heavies, Curiosity, Seal and Simply Red, with catchy lyrics and smooth melodies. The band's self penned songs have strong funky melodies and soulful chorus harmonies punched out from the three vocal talents help along by a very tight rhythm section.

Local band **Long Shore Drift** have also let me know that they are back on the local scene, starting with a recent gig down at the Glider pub in Dunstable. The band has had a bit of a hiatus after losing their bass guitarist in October last year. Although they had been doing the occasional acoustic gig with no bass, the full line-up is now back on-line with new bass man Tom McKeand. So keep an eye on the local gig listings as they intend to get back on the Luton/Dunstable gig circuit in the near future.

24/Mar/2004 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

A Land Downunda

I'm off to Australia this weekend to launch my latest CD - Two Short PlanX - at a big music festival in Canberra over the Easter weekend. The album is the result of a collaboration between myself and fellow Australian - Toni Wood - who is now living in Glasgow. I met up with Toni a few years ago and we immediately hit it off despite the fact that she originally comes from Brisbane and I hail from Sydney. If you were at the 2002 Dunstable Folk Weekend you would have seen the resulting band - **WoodworX** - on the main stage supporting **Lindisfarne**. The album has been a long time in the making - I recorded the about half of the original tracks in Melbourne at the beginning of 2002 and completed the sessions in Milton Keynes and Dunstable, with side trips to Wales and Yorkshire to get some of the guest artist's performances. The music is a mix of Australian, Scottish and contemporary songs and is somewhat more laid back than my last recording (enQ - Tear Down the Barriers). You can find out more information from the band's website at www.woodworx.org/cd if you are interested. Anyhow, while I'm out there I'll be checking out the live music scene and reporting back

In the meantime here's some local gig action while I'm away;

- tomorrow (Thursday) blues guitarist **Pete Harris** and harmonica player **Marc Houghton** will be performing a wide range of folk and blues at The Cricketers opposite Redbourn Common - £5.00 (more information from 01582-452954 or 07850-163241).
- on Friday (March 26) **Mashtun Grace** launch their new CD at Hitchin Club 85, with support from local favourites **Fog Donkey** and **Borderline**. Entry is £4 and doors open at 7:45pm,. Age 16+ (bring ID).
- there is a new 'open mic' acoustic club taking place on Sundays that welcomes all singers and instrumentalists of any age, style and standard. The session takes place at the Madcap Centre in Creed Street Wolverton, Milton Keynes. Entry is £2 and the doors open at 7:30pm. See the website for more details - www.wolvertonacousticclub.co.uk.
- on Thursday week (April 1) local Seattle-esque grunge rockers **Echelon Blue** return to the local scene at the Well in Hightown, Luton with support from Garrett (ex Jehu explosion) - £2
- Saturday week (April 3) you can hear some excellent jazz funk from **Common Ground** at The Well - £3

One interesting gig taking place on Sunday week (April 4) is at The Well. They are hosting an exhibition by photographer Alison Lea of almost 100 photographs taken over the last 20 years of artists ranging from **Iggy Pop** to **Simple Minds**. To set the mood there will be acoustic performances from **Bowfinger** and **The Occasion** - £2 doors open at 7pm.

31/Mar/2004 The Scene (Luton News/Dunstable Gazette)

The Brian Heywood Column

By the time you read this I'll be in Melbourne, no doubt trying to get my body clock in sync with the rest of the east coast of Australia. So while I get my act together 'downunda' here is some local Luton and Dunstable music news;

The programme of the Dunstable Folk and Dance weekend is looking pretty firm with headliners this year being the **Acoustic Strawbs** and English roots rockers the **Oysterband** booked for the Saturday night concert in Grove House Gardens supported by a return visit by **Más Y Más** who will be playing their irresistible mix of Latino Flamenco, Afro-Cuban and Celtic influences woven together by driving dance rhythms. The weekend will start off with a ceilidh from local band **MoonDance** with top local caller **Barry Goodman** at St Mary's Social Club Hall in West Street Dunstable. On Saturday there will be a number of music sessions and dance displays around the town followed by the main concert in the evening compered by **Rick Christian**. Sunday should see a few more music sessions and a concert in the afternoon at Grove House Gardens featuring singer/songwriter **Rick Christian**, **Time of Your Life** and a mix of local and regional talent.

On the Internet scene - top local band **Hush** now have their back catalogue online, just click www.hush.org.uk/musicstore/MusicStore.html. They say that following a few months of studio time, their long awaited debut album should be out by the beginning of June and will be added to their web store just as soon as stock arrives. Meanwhile down south, Hertfordshire based **My Pet Junkie** are taking a little breather from gigging in order to put the final touches on their debut album. In the meantime you can get free downloads of their first two demo CD's from www.mypetjunkie.com.

Local gigs...

- tomorrow (Thursday) local Seattle-esque grunge rockers **Echelon Blue** are doing a local gig at the Well Music Centre in Hightown, Luton with support from **Garrett** (ex Jehu explosion) - £2
- at The Well on Saturday (April 3) you can hear some funky, rhythmic, jazz funk from **Common Ground** - £3
- on Sunday (April 4) Hitchin Folk Club presents the totally mad **Wild Willy Barrett** with a show where acoustic meets roots meets folk meets country meets a guitar being sawn in half (www.sleepingdogz.co.uk) and **Cathryn Craig** and **Brian** at The Sun Hotel, Sun Street, Hitchin. For more information phone Maureen on 01462 812391.
- also on Sunday (April 4) is at The Well the "Rocksnapper.Images Through TIME" exhibition by photographer Alison Lea with acoustic performances from **Bowfinger** and **The Occasion**, **Steve Tebbut** and **Ali McQueen** - £2 doors open at 7pm.

Send gig information to "The Brian Heywood Column", PO Box 649, Dunstable, Beds, LU5 4XD or info@lutonscene.com. I would really appreciate it if promoters could let me know what they're doing, remember P. T. Barnum's immortal words; "Without publicity a terrible thing happens . . . nothing".